

Lead The Way

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This past year has given us a lot to be thankful for, and not the least is the quality of today's noncommissioned officer (NCO). Grounded in the basics and forged in combat, today's NCO has surpassed our expectations of a leader in today's full spectrum war. It requires a balancing act for an NCO to provide equal attention to his family, profession, and to his Soldiers.

In an Army at war, the leader's spouse assumes a more active role in the mentoring and support of the spouses in the unit. This starts with the platoon sergeant and squad leader spouses ensuring that the young spouses of the platoon are aware of all the programs the Army, post, and local communities provide to support the Army Family: The power, or detriment, of a general power of attorney; the pitfalls of planning your budget to the tax-free duty status of combat; fixing a leaky faucet; fidelity. All of these issues consume the family, and having a close-knit support group takes on significant importance. Participation in the unit's Family Support Group is essential for today's NCO spouse. Young Soldiers and their families need a sense of belonging to a community or a tribe. It makes sense to see the NCO's spouse actively involved in the unit's support group, seeing that about 90 percent of our formations consist of enlisted Soldiers. As the NCO Creed says, all Soldiers (and their families) are entitled to outstanding leadership; I will provide that leadership ... I will communicate consistently with my Soldiers (and their families) and never leave them uninformed.



What our Soldiers want to hear from their sergeants is the Army's expectations of them as a Soldier. The NCO serves as a conduit for successful duty as a Soldier. The NCO is the one person in the chain of command who has the ability to counsel and develop every Soldier on an individual basis. The NCO addresses everything from common courtesy and simple everyday chores to the complicated operation of weaponry and everything in between. No task is too trivial for a corporal or a command sergeant major. A good frame of reference is to consider how today's parents are faced with the information age and its influence on their children's value system—what is considered acceptable

behavior in today's world. We see a far wider range of values instilled in the first 18 years of a young Soldier's life than we did 20 years ago. For instance, most of our young Americans bring a civilian workforce mentality into the Army. They believe that they should act like a Soldier on duty, but believe that they can behave any way they please off duty. Our current 7 Army Values are meant to be more than just a bumper sticker. They serve as a guidepost for our development as Soldiers and as decent human beings. It has helped us realize the American dream well before civil society, in that every Soldier is truly created equal.

Today's NCOs have to see their way through the fog of "everything's important" and focus on the more important aspects of this Army: the profession, the Soldier, and the Family.

BASIC FIELD MANUAL
ENGINEER SOLDIER'S HANDBOOK
(This manual supercedes FM 21-105, March 12, 1941)
CHAPTER ONE

1. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN ENGINEER –

You are an Engineer. You are going to build bridges and blow them up. You are going to stop tanks and destroy them. You are going to build roads, airfields, and buildings. You are going to construct fortifications. You are going to fight with many weapons. You are going to make sure our own troops move ahead against all opposition, and you are going to see to it that enemy obstacles do not interfere with our advance. You are an Engineer.

2. YOU AND YOUR JOB –

a. You have been chosen to do a man-sized job for the Army and for your country. To do it well, you must keep your eyes and ears open, your mind alert, and always be on your toes. You must keep yourself in top-notch condition. You must become physically tough and an expert at your job. Whether or not our Army succeeds depends a lot on how much better you are at your job than the enemy engineer is at his.

b. That's a large order. The Army knows it is; but the Army also knows that if you give the best that's in you, you will do the job well. You will build, tear down, and fight better than other Soldiers in the world. You will be an American Engineer.

Excerpt provided by 1SG Mike Morris